

Obituary



AN APPRECIATION OF HARRY MITCHELL SHERMAN

By DOUGLASS W. MONTGOMERY.

Harry Mitchell Sherman has passed away, and it is now thirty-five years since I first knew him. I say "knew" rather than "met" because, from the first, we were intimately associated, and I grew to know him very thoroughly as the years passed by. There is an old French saying, "Il faut tres longtemps pour faire le tour d'un homme," and during these years of active professional life I made the circuit of him fairly frequently, and found no unlovely or mean spots in him. If I can tell the truth about him it is all that I ask, as the truth without embellishment is the most interesting thing that can be produced.

Although Dr. Sherman's father had resided in San Francisco in the very early days, and his uncle, William Sherman, had been master of the Mint, he arrived here a comparative stranger, and had no easy time during the first months of practice. He was fortunate, however, to become associated with George Chismore, one of the most efficient, kindly, humane men I ever knew. He was also fortunate in acquiring the orthopedic work in the Children's Hospital, which was then a very modest institution, located in two frame buildings on Thirteenth Street, near Folsom. He soon made this the chief orthopedic center in San Francisco. What an energetic individual he was then to be sure, with his large, powerful frame and his quick step!

Sherman's manner, whole bearing and voice are best described as being those of a grand seigneur. His manner was always nervous and high strung, without, however, a trace of weakness. He impressed one as driving himself, and one felt he would be lonely if he ever gave up the job. Al-

phonse Daudet speaks of the radiance of those who go cheerfully to their work, and it was even so with Sherman. His grand ways, his absorption, and at times his apparent neglect of those surrounding him were, however, something quite different from conceit or vanity, and never bore the marks of being in any way assumed or of conveying an ulterior meaning. They were as natural to him as any feature of his face, and they manifestly had the substantial backing of a fine character, an integrity that was sometimes too uncompromising and that amounted to a peculiarity, and accomplishments far above the ordinary. Sweeter to me than any music was the sound of that lofty, rather muffled voice with a nuance of affection in it, as I heard it, possibly on the street or in a crowded room. It was the voice of a friend in a world where, from the nature of things, true friends must necessarily be scarce. A most unselfish friend, who never required anything but friendship in return.

Some time after Sherman's arrival in San Francisco a number of medical men, including himself, George Chismore, Henry Ferrer, John F. Morse, J. D. Arnold, A. P. Whittel, W. S. Whitwell, R. I. Bowie, C. A. von Hoffmann, W. W. Kerr, Martin Regensburger and myself constituted what was informally called the Friday Evening Club. Out of this association there developed the San Francisco Polyclinic, of which Sherman was for a long time secretary. He worked hard at this task, and it was a heavy one. I can see him yet, sitting bolt upright, evening after evening, writing all the correspondence in his swift flowing, perfectly legible hand; he had neither amanuensis nor typewriter. All this time he, together with Charlotte Blake Brown, contributed the main force which drove forward the Children's Hospital.

When San Francisco was visited by the plague there was much confusion of tongues owing to the many commercial interests involved. As in all such questions, if the full truth is known, adjustments take place which are almost invariably advantageous to everyone concerned. Dr. Sherman was one of those who undertook to enlighten the public so that these adjustments might be brought about, but the public was an unwilling listener. At a public meeting at which he spoke he appended the following characteristic remark: "The smallness of the audience indicates that the people are either indifferent or inimical to the present campaign. It, therefore, shows, not that we should cease or slacken our efforts, but rather that we should more vigorously continue them until everyone is aware of the facts." This is the kind of spirit which would save a community from itself. The city did finally realize that it was better to solve the problem than to evade it, and the correct solution has been of infinite benefit to this community as a whole, irrespective of persons. Truly the rain falls on the just and on the unjust alike.

From the Polyclinic he passed into the University of California, taking the Chair of Surgery. Here he worked with his accustomed energy, and was an appreciated teacher, as he already was an accomplished writer. The earthquake came, and everything was considerably tumbled about, but instead of decreasing his exertions, he increased them. He assembled the faculty almost immediately at a meeting in his home, and organized a campaign for construction. The medical buildings, which had been devoted solely to laboratory work and to lecturing, were changed by him into a hospital. Under the disturbed conditions, this was an arduous and difficult task. Having accomplished it, however, he, at great personal sacrifice, urged his own private patients to enter there, while a number of his colleagues were quartering theirs in a much more commodious and more accessible private hospital.

In the year 1913 his connection with the Uni-

versity of California was severed. One of the main reasons for this severance was that he had by his personal exertions made the position an enviable one. One thing certain is that it was not because of inactivity on his part, as he was then working at his height in writing and lecturing, and in his public and private practice. It was after this that he strove, successfully, to enlighten the public on the nature of tuberculosis, the only way to combat this insidious disease. And it was long after this that he worked in the same way on the cancer problem, and with the same enthusiasm and success, and he brought to both these questions an exceptional gift of exposition.

But Dr. Sherman was one of those who cannot live by bread alone; an ideal was as necessary for him as the air he breathed. He was a charter member of the College of Surgeons, a body representing the best elements in this division of our profession in North America. Among its ideals was that each should strive to enlighten the public in regard to the great maladies, such as tuberculosis, syphilis and cancer, which cause so much misery and destruction, and in which, if properly understood by the commonality, so much may be accomplished to control or to mitigate. These subjects, together with his hospital work, chiefly in St. Luke's Hospital, afforded an outlet for his untiring energy. In fact, his private work represented only a small part of his activities.

When the war came he was indefatigable in work among the troops, and finally received a commission in the Medical Corps, and was honorably mustered out on the cessation of hostilities. It was during his army service that he contracted a severe influenza that, as a remote consequence, caused his death.

He was peculiarly fitted for this army work because of his expertness in orthopedic surgery which was the work of his youth. He was the dean of the orthopedists on the Pacific Coast and facile princeps. I well remember at a dinner of the University of Columbia Alumni, given after his return from service, listening to one of his lucid, delightful, profitable talks on his work in camp.

But you will say, "What reward did he have for all this labor?" It can be answered that he had much. Being so interested in his work and so busily engaged in it, he had no time either to become dull and introspective or to do evil to his neighbor. One might associate for days with Dr. Sherman without hearing from him an ill-natured remark, or the expression of an ignoble thought. This escape from our chief enemy, ourself, is one of the great, inestimable rewards of a busy life, spent in the pursuit of worthy aims.

Harry Mitchell Sherman has passed away, but his deeds have not passed away, and his individuality remains among us. The encouragement for us, in contemplating his life, lies in the fact that he did not exist for himself alone, rather that he was a fine type of a fine race. He was honorable, but can anyone who knew him imagine him as being anything else? What was true of this moral trait ran through the entire fiber of the man; he was what he was, not so much because he willed it, but because he could not be anything else. There are those that are of the earth, earthy, and are born to corruption, and there are those born with a living spirit, and surely this is what Saint Paul meant.

Deaths

Armstrong, John M. Died in Pasadena, California, April 23, 1921. Age, 64. Was a graduate of University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1885. Licensed in California, 1895.

Hay, Rilla Grafton. Died in Los Angeles, California, April 7, 1921. Was a graduate of Iowa

State University, Iowa. Licensed in California, 1879.

Hubbard, B. Roswell. Died in Los Angeles, California, June 11, 1921. Was a graduate of Eclectic Medical Institute, Cincinnati, 1879. Licensed in California, 1901.

Kenyon, Frank P. A graduate of Detroit Medical College, 1876. Licensed in California, 1907. Died in Pomona, California, May 8, 1921. Was a member of the Medical Society, State of California.

Lillie, William A. Died in Monterey, California, June 21, 1921. Was a graduate of Bellevue Hospital and Medical College, 1895. Licensed in California, 1895. Was a member of Monterey County Medical Society.

Oliver, Leonard Briggs. A graduate of University of Iowa, 1887. Licensed in 1920. Died in Chula Vista, California, June 10, 1921.

O'Reilly, E. F. Died in Lancaster, California, March 16, 1921. Was a graduate of University of Southern California, 1914. Licensed in California, 1914.

Newkirk, Garrett. Died in Pasadena, California, April 7, 1921. Was a graduate of Rush Medical College, 1868. Licensed in California, 1901.

Swancott, John, of Los Angeles. Died March 9, 1921. Age, 27. Was a graduate of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Los Angeles, 1917.

Teubner, Charles. Died in Oxnard, California, June 9, 1921. Age, 65. Was a graduate of University City of New York, 1885. Licensed in California, 1888.

Walker, Frederick Earl. Died in Long Beach, California, April 24, 1921. Was a graduate of University of Iowa, 1898. Licensed in California, 1915. Was a member of Los Angeles County Medical Society.

West, Eugene Francis. Died in Felton, California, June 8, 1921. Was a graduate of California Medical College, California, 1889. Licensed in California, 1890.

Woodin, Irving. Died in Los Angeles, May 10, 1921. Age, 69. A graduate of Long Island College Hospital, New York, 1874. Licensed in California, 1883.

Harris, Bartlett Y. Died in San Francisco, June 5, 1921. Was a graduate of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Chicago, Ill., 1888. Licensed in California, 1888.

Kilbourn, Harvey B. A graduate of Jefferson Medical College, Pa., 1879. Licensed in California, 1886. Died June 4, 1921, in San Francisco. Age 74.

Lain, Elizabeth. Died in Santa Rosa, May 17, 1921. Was a graduate of Hahnemann Hospital College, San Francisco, and College of Physicians and Surgeons, 1897. Licensed in California, 1897. Was a member of the Medical Society, State of California.

Pace, H. L. Died in Chicago, Ill. Was a former resident of Tulare, Cal. Graduated from Missouri Medical College, 1890. Licensed in California, 1890.

McKee, James A. Died in Sacramento, Cal., April 20, 1921. Was a graduate of Rush Medical College, 1886. Licensed in California, same year. Was a member of the Medical Society, State of California.

Moss, J. Mora. Died in Washington, D. C., April 24, 1921. Was a graduate of Cooper Medical College, California, 1894. Licensed in California, 1895. Was a major in the Army, and a member of the Medical Society, State of California.

Topp, Thos. M. A graduate of Chicago Homeopathic Medical College, Ill., 1897. Licensed in California, 1898. Died in Truckee, Cal., March 17, 1921.